

LAND USE APPLICATION SUMMARY

Property Location: 725 Vineland Place & 1750 Hennepin Avenue
Project Name: Walker Art Center Addition and Site Improvements
Prepared By: Lisa Steiner, City Planner, (612) 673-3950
Applicant: Walker Art Center
Project Contact: John Cook, HGA
Request: To construct an addition and complete site improvements.
Required Applications:

Site Plan Review	For an approximately 5,000 square foot addition to an existing building.
Variance	Of the plaza design standards.

SITE DATA

Existing Zoning	OR2 High Density Office Residence District SH Shoreland Overlay District
Lot Area	244,500 square feet / 5.61 acres
Ward	7
Neighborhoods	Lowry Hill; adjacent to Loring Park
Designated Future Land Use	Public and Institutional
Land Use Features	Commercial Corridor (Hennepin Avenue)
Small Area Plan(s)	N/A

Date Application Deemed Complete	May 21, 2015	Date Extension Letter Sent	Not applicable
End of 60-Day Decision Period	July 20, 2015	End of 120-Day Decision Period	Not applicable

BACKGROUND

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PRESENT USE. The subject site comprises over 5.6 acres of land bounded by Hennepin Avenue, Vineland Place, Bryant Avenue South, and Groveland Terrace. The Walker Art Center is located on these two parcels. An underground public parking garage is also located on the site which provides parking for more than 600 vehicles and is accessed off of Vineland Place. The majority of the western portion of the site is currently an expansive lawn area.

SURROUNDING PROPERTIES AND NEIGHBORHOOD. The Minneapolis Sculpture Garden is located across Vineland Place from the Walker Art Center. Across Bryant Avenue South is a multi-family residential building. Across Groveland Terrace there are a number of large buildings which house a mix of uses. The site is located along a portion of Hennepin Avenue which is planned to be reconstructed in the next few years as part of the Hennepin/Lyndale Avenue Reconstruction project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION. The applicant is proposing to construct an approximately 5,000 square foot addition at the northwestern corner of the Walker Art Center building facing Vineland Place. The one-story addition will house a new café area and new entrance to the existing lobby. A renovation of existing adjacent interior areas will also be undertaken. The proposed addition will be clad in primarily bronze metal panels with large expanses of glass. The addition will have a green roof incorporated above. Additional landscaping improvements are proposed on the site with the addition of new paths through the site and new groves of trees. Also, the stairs that currently wrap the corner of the building along Hennepin and Vineland are proposed to be removed and replaced with grass. Along Hennepin between Vineland and the Hennepin entry into the Walker, all of the existing pavers and circular landscaped areas will be removed and replaced with grass. At the south portion of the site along Hennepin, the existing pavers will be removed and replaced. Also, three new signs are also proposed.

CONTINUANCE. This project was originally scheduled for a public hearing at the June 15 Planning Commission meeting. However, staff discovered an additional required variance of the plaza standards for the proposal after the noticing date. In order to allow time for staff review of the variance, a continuance is recommended for both applications to the July 6 City Planning Commission meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS. No public comments were received by the time this report was written. Any correspondence received prior to the public meeting will be forwarded on to the Planning Commission for consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department of Community Planning and Economic Development recommends that the City Planning Commission adopt staff findings for the applications by John Cook, on behalf of the Walker Art Center, for the properties located at 725 Vineland Place/1750 Hennepin Avenue:

A. Variance of the plaza standards.

Recommended motion: **Continue** the application for a variance of the plaza standards to the July 6, 2015, City Planning Commission meeting.

B. Site Plan Review for an addition to the existing building.

Recommended motion: **Continue** the site plan review application for an addition to the existing building to the July 6, 2015, City Planning Commission meeting.